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aircraft, ship, and weapons systems designations and descriptions; battle, campaign, and unit histories; biographies; essays on diplomacy, doctrine, and geography; military terms and the many other categories necessary for thorough treatment of entries from "A" to "Ad."

This encyclopedia promises to become the leader in its field. Scholars, researchers, even those with casual questions will find it invaluable—if they are patient. The publication schedule calls for only 2-3 volumes annually and that translates to a 15-25 year wait for the entire series; and they will want to be associated with a subscribing library because at $30.50 per volume, the total investment may be more substantial than most individuals will wish to undertake.

W.R. PETTYJOHN
Commander, U.S. Navy

King, Irving H. *George Washington's Coast Guard.* Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1978. 229pp.

Dr. King offers an interesting history of the Revenue Cutter Service, forerunner of today's Coast Guard, during the years 1789-1801. At first impression this book would seem to have a somewhat narrow appeal to American history buffs and coastguardsmen but after just a few pages the reader is quickly immersed in the problems of this young nation and the urgent needs for an agency to collect revenue during the Federalist Era.

The fascinating thing about this short book (only 170 pages of text) is that many of the problems and circumstances faced by our founding fathers are still with us today. There is a chapter on command selection for the first 10 cutters. President Washington and Secretary Hamilton sought information about candidates from many sources but kept close personal control over the final selection process. Washington retained for himself the exclusive right to appoint these masters. Prior military experience, seamanship ability and even political influence played roles in the selection process.

The building of these first 10 ships, for which Hamilton desired to pay no more than $1,000 apiece, was plagued by cost overruns and change orders. Finding builders who would construct "large" cutters for limited money was frustrating. In spite of this, Hamilton had the foresight to have the ships built in shipyards in various parts of the country to set up a shore establishment rather than have them all built in a single yard, and he had the prospective masters of the vessels supervise the construction. His objective was to "... build a ship not just to acquire a revenue cutter but to reap for the nation a harvest of military, economic and political benefits that would surely flow from the cutter establishment."

The domestic manufacture of sailcloth was fostered to decrease dependency on foreign imports and when, in December 1794, it was decided to import 20 anchors from Europe for use on six frigates Hamilton ordered the U.S. Minister to the Court of St. James to give a preference to American bottoms when he shipped the anchors.

Pay for the crews of the cutters was frequently a problem, and the fact that a master mariner could secure better compensation for sailing merchant ships than for sailing cutters made it difficult to attract officers for the service. This must sound familiar to the naval aviation and nuclear submarine communities.

In the desire for economy many of the cutters sailed shorthanded and in 1796 Hamilton's successor at Treasury, Oliver Wolcott, in a report on officers' pay to the House of Representatives, explained that the petitioners reported "... their compensation as being inadequate in consequence of the late increase of the prices of provisions

& . . . [cost] of liv[ing], and pray that they may be increased."

Concerning operation of the cutters, although their primary mission was revenue collection, they quickly were engaged in such additional duties as aiding distressed mariners, charting the harbors and coastal waters, maintaining aids to navigation and augmenting the new Navy during the Quasi-War with France. During that period, the cutters convoyed American merchant ships, helped keep open the sealanes of the North Atlantic and the Caribbean, captured 16 armed French vessels, participated in the capture of four others and recaptured 10 American vessels that had been seized by the French. One master even developed a method to distill fresh water from salt water aboard ship, no doubt the precursor of today's shipboard evaporators.

Coast Guard and Navy officers and those with a liking for American history should find this a fascinating book despite the narrow time period covered and the resemblance to a doctoral dissertation. The similarity of problems of the 1790s and the 1970s should give us cause to reflect on how far we really have come in the past 200 years.

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Lewy, Guenter. *America in Vietnam.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. 576pp.

Shortly after the fall of Saigon, President Ford announced that there would be no official investigation of the causes of the American defeat in Southeast Asia. By and large, journalists and scholars have exhibited a similar disinterest. Vietnam is yesterday's newspaper that featured a confusing, emotional and tragic story we'd rather forget.

One, however, who chose to analyze rather than ignore the war is Dr. Guenter Lewy, Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts. A scholar who previously had been nominated for a National Book Award, Lewy devoted 5 years of research to his subject. The result is an excellent book organized around the examination of two issues: U.S. military strategy and tactics in Vietnam and the morality of the U.S. combat conduct.

Lewy's 200-page military history of the Vietnam war—the first half of the book—relies extensively upon thousands of official secret reports he demanded and received under the Freedom of Information Act. He explains succinctly the major phases of the war, criticizing as futile the basic U.S. military strategy of attrition. He attributes this strategy to organizational determinism: a military bureaucracy that persisted in "doing its thing" even when its own analyses (that Lewy quotes) damned the strategy. According to Lewy, it was this "special [military] knowledge that Westmoreland and most of his subordinates had [that] equipped them poorly to understand the political and social dynamics of the war."

Lewy does not suggest that it was communist rhetoric that triumphed over American bullets. The final defeat of South Vietnam was brought about by a strong, modern, conventional North Vietnamese army. Lewy's point is that the basic South Vietnamese weakness was a lack of leadership. U.S. military professionals, he writes, knew of and yet chose to ignore that fact, preferring to fight in place of the South Vietnamese. Lewy does not suggest, however, that defeat was inevitable. He explains, without excusing them, Thieu's 1975 decisions as heavily influenced by the sharp drop in American material support. He cites Nixon's 1973 secret written promise that the United States "will respond with full force should the [cease-fire] settlement be violated by North Vietnam." Lewy concludes that the fall of South Vietnam had many causes: the iron will and incredible